



NESTOR PRODUCTUS, (Gould)

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Phillip Island Parrot.

Wilson's Parrakeet, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. ii. p. 170.?

Long-billed Parrakeet, *Ib.*, p. 171.?

Plyctolophus productus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. 1836, p. 19.

Nestor productus, Gould, Syn. of the Birds of Australia, Part I.

I HAVE considerable pleasure in being enabled to add a second and so beautiful a species as the present to the genus *Nestor* of Wagler. Like its near ally, the *N. hypopolius*, which, so far as is yet known, is only found in New Zealand, the *N. productus* has a very limited habitat, the entire race, as I am credibly informed, being confined to Phillip Island, whose whole circumference is not more than five miles in extent; so strictly in fact is it confined to this isolated spot, that many persons who have resided in Norfolk Island for years, have assured me its occurrence there is never known, although the distance from one island to the other is not more than three or four miles. I regret to state, that, in consequence of the settlement of Norfolk Island, the native haunts of this fine bird have been so intruded upon, and such a war of extermination been carried on against it, that if such be not the case already, the time is not far distant when the species will be completely extirpated, and, like the Dodo, its skin and bones become the only mementos of its existence.

Had I been able to visit Norfolk and Phillip Islands, I should certainly have made every inquiry into the native habits and economy of this very singular form among the Parrots, the nature of its food, mode of procuring it, &c.; and I would now urge the necessity of these investigations upon those who may be favourably situated for making them. Like all the other members of the extensive family of *Psittacidae*, it bears captivity remarkably well, readily becoming contented, cheerful, and an amusing companion. During my stay at Sydney, I had an opportunity of seeing a living example in the possession of Major Anderson, and was much interested with many of its actions, which were so different from those of every other member of its family, that I felt convinced they were equally different and curious in a state of nature. This bird was not confined to a cage, but permitted to range over the house, along the floors of which it passed, not with the awkward waddling gait of a Parrot, but in a succession of leaps, precisely after the manner of the *Corvidæ*. Mrs. Anderson, to whom I am indebted for the little I could learn respecting it, informed me that it is found among the rocks and upon the loftiest trees of the island, that it is so tame as to be readily taken alive with a noose, and that it feeds upon the blossoms of the white-wood tree, or white *Hibiscus*, sucking the honey of the flowers: the mention of this latter circumstance induced me to examine the tongue of the bird, which presented a very peculiar structure, not, like that of the true honey-feeding Parrakeets (the *Trichoglossi*), furnished with a brush-like termination, but with a narrow horny scoop on the under side, which, together with the extremity of the tongue, resembled the end of a finger with the nail beneath instead of above: this peculiarity in the structure of the organ is doubtless indicative of a corresponding peculiarity in the nature of the food upon which the bird subsists. I may mention that Sir J. P. Millbank, Bart., informed me that a living example of this species in his possession evinced a strong partiality to the leaves of the common lettuce and other soft vegetables, and that it was also very fond of the juice of fruits, of cream and butter.

Mrs. Anderson told me that it lays four eggs in the hollow part of a tree, but beyond this I was unable to ascertain anything respecting its nidification.

Its voice is a hoarse, quacking, inharmonious noise, sometimes resembling the barking of a dog.

It would appear from the numerous specimens I have examined that the sexes scarcely differ from each other in colour; the young, on the contrary, have but little of the rich yellow and red markings of the breast, that part being olive-brown like the back.

The general colour of the upper surface brown; head and back of the neck tinged with grey, the feathers of these parts as well as of the back margined with a deeper tint; rump, belly, and under tail-coverts deep red; cheeks, throat, and chest yellow, the former tinged with red; shoulders on their inner surface yellow tinged with rufous olive; tail-feathers banded at the base with orange-yellow and brown; the inner webs of the quill-feathers at the base and beneath, with dusky red and brown; irides very dark brown; bill brown; nostrils, bare skin round the eye, and feet dark olive-brown.

Our Plate represents an old and a nearly adult bird, exhibiting traces of the immature plumage on the chest, of the natural size.